

“When things are not as you expected”

You must decide today to realize that your future is going to hold some issues that will occur without your knowing. We live in a self proclaimed “prophetic generation” where everyone wants to claim the title “prophet”. Sometimes I feel like singing, “Here a prophet, there a prophet, everywhere a prophet, prophet”! Regardless of the masses of confused and self proclaimed “know it alls”, I’m convinced that God will indeed set some things into motion without our knowing it first. Surely we can all relate.

This was true for Elisha and the Shunammite woman. In the book of II Kings and the fourth chapter we read that this woman wants to do something for the man of God. So she does it. In return the man of God pronounces that she will have a son. When you read the text, you will find out that this was a sensitive issue for the woman, for she didn’t want to be teased by such a declaration from Elisha.

Now most of us know that story. The woman did have a son, but then sometime later the child dies. I’m encouraging you to focus not on the woman’s faith, not on the woman’s promise and not even on the sacrifice that the woman made in building a room for the man of God, but I would rather that you focus on what Elisha says when this woman comes proclaiming the death of what the man of God said would come forth in life. Elisha states to Gehazi his servant “Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me, and has not told me.” (II Kings 4:27 NKJV)

You see, it is spiritual ignorance to totally disregard the truth that God will author and allow some things without making them known to anyone. This message is for everyone, but especially church leadership. Often times we are placed under a yoke by the people we lead or we may even place a yoke on ourselves. We convince ourselves or allow others to convince us that we should completely know everything that is going on all the time. The truth is that you really don’t know everything God is up to and although he may offer you some insight or even total clarity from time to time, I can boldly proclaim to you that if you do not prepare, it is only a matter of time before you are saddened by the reality of a surprise in the spirit.

Here’s what I’m learning you have to do when things aren’t as you expected...

1. DECLARE THAT HE IS SOVERIEGN

Just because things didn’t happened as you expected or you have been surprised by an outcome, doesn’t mean that God has changed his mind.

It is simple basic Christianity that understands that all our faith will be tested.

Just because you’ve been surprised by something unexpected does not change the truth that His plans are to prosper you, give you a hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

We must dig deep within ourselves to find the real faith that refuses to die. Recently I spoke at a dynamic conference in Cameroon, Africa and it was themed “I Refuse To Die”. This has become more than a theme to me! It has become an continual anthem in my spirit.

Oh God give us a faithful church that will not accept the situations that surprise or discourage them, but give us a church that will take its rightful authority in the Kingdom.

I don’t need people who will dress up, come visit me, send me flowers and mourn my losses. Don’t preach the funeral over your purpose or the purposes of someone else, but rather take the attitude of Elisha and “lay down” over what is seemingly dead and command it to live again!

You should shout aloud right now, “I Refuse To Die”!

2. DECLARE THAT HE WILL GET THE GLORY

There are specific things that will transpire, not because God is mad at you, not because you are sinful or even because you are holy. There are certain things that will transpire because God wants to be glorified in an awesome way!

When Jesus was confronted about the death of Lazarus, he replied, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” (John 11:4 NKJV)

It may be hard for you to come to grips with, however, God is worthy of more praise than you and I have given him today or any other day of our life. And sometimes for Him to get a new kind of praise out of us, He must arrange a new kind of circumstance for us to walk through.

You cannot praise Him as healer, if you are not first sick.
You cannot praise Him as deliver, without first being bound.
You cannot praise Him as provider, if you are not first in lack.

Mary Magdalene had a special kind of praise, because she had seven devils that tormented her for years before she met the deliverer.

I prophesy to you an absolute right now, “Whatever you are going through, if you will make up your mind that God is going to get the glory for it, He will get the glory for it”. All things will work together for your good if you will receive it in Jesus name.

You should shout aloud again right now, “God is just about to get glory out of the trouble I am walking through. He is about to show up and He is about to show out”!

3. DECLARE THAT YOU WILL STAND

Ephesians 6:13 NKJV – “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

When things are not as you expected and you have done all that you know to do, you simply stand. It is when things go the opposite way that you had expected and hoped that your character, maturity and faith will be revealed.

Some people think that their character speaks through their possessions or through the level of blessing they are currently in, but despite these beliefs and our ways of thinking God shows us differently.

It was Job’s faithfulness to God in the midst of his hardship that won him into the Christian Character Hall of Fame. Joseph’s faithfulness to God in the prison cell meant more to Him than Joseph’s faithfulness in the palace.

Endurance doesn’t even begin until there is a good reason to quit.

As I pastor Covenant Life International Church and travel the world preaching this great gospel, I am finding most often times that the Body of Christ has the wrong interpretation of the Word of God that we have heard.

When we think of “having done everything, stand”, most of us think of “stand” as a position, but it is not a position. Standing is a mindset and an inner determination. If you think standing is a position that you must

take, you are going to constantly feel like a failure. For if you haven't as of yet, you will face things that will knock you down repeatedly. To know, understand and accept this isn't negativity, but practical reality!

I know that standing is not a position, but a mindset, because of how I now have come to a greater revelation of the sixth chapter of Paul's letter to Ephesus. Why would God give us all this armor and repeatedly tell us that we were in an army with an enemy that desires to steal, kill and destroy us and then try to make us think that when we've endured the battle and done everything else we know to do, just take the "position" of "standing".

You don't have to be a five star general to know that war is tuff, and no one should just ever stand up in an upright position in the heat of the battle. I don't know about you all, but I myself have been in some battles that if I were to just "stand" up I would have been a "sitting duck" for the enemy and he would have taken me out. If standing is a position to you then you are going to be an easy target when the battle gets really heated.

Rather than considering standing as a position, consider it as an inner determination. The Shunammite woman stood at her most traumatic time. Her promise is dead, but we find her standing, but not on her feet, but rather laying down wrapped around the feet of Elisha. The prophet represents the voice of God and the voice of God always speaks the will of God and we find this Shunammite woman standing as much as anyone has ever stood in their life, but not on her feet, but broken on the ground holding on to the original word of life. If that's not enough to abolish your mentality that "standing" is a position, consider with me Elisha in this story. Elisha stood with the Shunammite woman regarding her promised son that he prophesied life to, but we do not find in scripture that while he was "standing" with her he was on his feet. We find in scripture that Elisha stood with her by laying down over her lifeless promise.

Preachers preach the "stand" out of Ephesians Chapter Six with arrogance and pride yoking the people with a mindset that they cannot break in humility in the midst of the battle. When we do this we teach our congregations to cage their emotions and pretend like everything is okay, even when its not. This is religion! For religion says keep it together on the outside even if it is going to hell on the inside.

I declare to you with an Apostolic Attitude of confidence today that if you do not change your mindset on the "stand" in Ephesians Chapter Six it is only a matter of time before you are targeted by the enemy. You should know that the next shot you take could be fatal to your purpose and destiny in God.

I hear God saying prophetically for many of His people "take cover". He's not saying this because he wants us to be a coward to the spiritual forces of wickedness that war against us, but he is saying it because when you clothe or cover yourself with things like "love, humility, faith, praise and salvation" you become camouflaged to the enemy.

Psalms 132:13-16 – Lets us know that God has chosen Zion and will clothe her priest with salvation.

Psalms 30:11 – Lets us know that we should be clothed with gladness.

I Peter 5:5 – All of you be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility.